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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON PRESIDENT MADURO'S VISIT TO
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 27, 2004

1. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 10/23, entitled "Amnesty." "President Maduro is visiting Washington, and because President Bush is probably busy with his electoral campaign, he met with Secretary of State Colin Powell to discuss several issues of interest to both countries."

"Before leaving Honduras, Maduro announced that he was going to lobby for another TPS extension and to request more aid from the U.S. to fight drug trafficking. In addition, the discussions with Powell dealt with the high oil prices, the OAS General Secretariat, the situation in Haiti, and the fact that some Central American countries are planning to send troops as a result of a request from the U.S."

"Even though all these issues are important, we're aware that the U.S. won't be able to help us that much to ease the crisis we're going through because of the high oil prices, and we already know that additional assistance to combat drug trafficking won't be significant, although they are the ones most affected by it. Therefore, the most important issue for us will be the extension of TPS, which Washington has said will be decided after the elections."

"We hope the negotiations carried out by President Maduro are useful for the country, and we're satisfied to know that he's personally taken over the negotiation on this issue that is essential for us."

2. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 10/25, entitled "Two in the Bush." "Honduras is one of the few countries to benefit from the MCA, which will distribute about a billion dollars for social projects among 16 poor countries that have qualified. This was one of the issues discussed by President Maduro in his recent meeting with Secretary of State Colin Powell, considering the fact that the first funds would be disbursed early next year."

"Honduras needs an extraordinary amount of resources to stimulate its economic growth, since the package of measures implemented to achieve an agreement with the IMF are far from strengthening the economy."

"Another issue discussed with Powell was the extension of TPS. The U.S. government said the decision will be announced in 10 days, and we expect it to be positive since Bush himself has proposed in his campaign a mechanism similar to TPS for all immigrants."

"The Democrats have a broader initiative in this matter, because they're proposing an amnesty that appears to be what most immigrants aspire to. For the time being, it's better to have a bird in the hand than two in the bush, and a new TPS extension will give a breather to our countrymen living in the U.S."

Palmer